

### REMARKS

Claims 55, 57, 58, 65, and 67-79 are pending in the application. Claim 55 has been amended as indicated above. New Claims 80-84 introduced above depend from allowed Claim 78. Support for the subject matter recited in new Claims 80-84 can be found in currently pending Claims 57, 58, 67, 69, and 70.

Claims 78 and 79 directed to hydroxy acids have been allowed.

Claims 55, 57, 58, 65, and 67-77 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,901,236 to Assarsson. For the following reasons, applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As amended above, Claim 55, from which Claims 57, 58, 65, and 67-77 ultimately depend, recites that after binder-containing cellulose fibers have been provided, superabsorbent particles are combined with the binder-containing cellulose fibers. Combining superabsorbent particles with binder-containing cellulose fiber after a step of providing binder-containing cellulose fiber is not taught or suggested by Assarsson.

Assarsson describes an invention directed to hydrogel composites that anchor themselves in fibrous or cellular matrices. Assarsson does not teach or suggest providing a binder-containing cellulose fiber and, after providing such binder-containing cellulose fiber, combining superabsorbent particles with the binder-containing cellulose fiber. For at least this reason, the subject matter of independent Claim 55, as amended above, is non-obvious over Assarsson.

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Accordingly, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the outstanding rejection and allowance of the application. If there are any remaining issues, the Examiner is asked to call applicants' attorney at the number listed below so that any outstanding issues can be resolved in a timely and efficient manner.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service in a sealed envelope as first class mail with postage thereon fully prepaid and addressed to Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on the below date.

Date:

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